

“ THE KINGDOM OF NEVER-GROW-OLD ”

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That is a pretty scene in Ethel Barrymore's simple little play, "Cousin Kate," where the happy Irish lover throws open the gates of "the Kingdom of Never-Grow-Old." This Irish lover, a man who has learned, as Francis Murphy would say, that "it's time enough to be dignified when you're dead," had ever kept himself in touch with the children and had not permitted himself to become a stranger to the things that most delight the children's hearts. By chance he meets with "Cousin Kate," with whom he falls desperately in love. He mentions the famous old tale of the "Three Bears and Silver Locks," and "Cousin Kate" asks him if he is interested in such stories. He confesses the truth and admits that he has made it a practice to fight off the ravages of increasing years by keeping in touch with the simple things of life and mingling with the little ones. He tells her that it is just such things as these that keeps men and women young, and he adds that these pastimes are merely journeys to "the kingdom of never-grow-old." "Cousin Kate" drops into a seat and says: "Tell me the story of the 'Three Bears and Silver Locks.'" The young Irishman begins the tale and when its conclusion is anticipated by his fair listener, showing that she has a familiarity with such stories, her lover takes a seat beside her and with a fine display of enthusiasm, says: "You are one of us; you, too, are of the kingdom!"

Stage folks have no monopoly in the touring of this kingdom. There are many busy men and women in this world today, as there have been busy men and women in the past, who make frequent journeys to those hallowed precincts. "And a little child shall lead them" is not all a prophecy; it is history. Some of the world's strongest men have been led by little ones; not led from the path of duty, but kept in that path by the influence which the association with little children had upon their lives. Several years ago when Benjamin Harrison, then president of the United States, visited Omaha, he addressed a great gathering of children on the high school grounds. Always happy in his speeches to men, General Harrison showed that he was, as well, a children's orator. He knew how to command their attention; he knew how to touch their hearts; and, president though he was, he made the bold confession, then and there, that he had made it a practice to seek the company of little children in order to obtain the relaxation necessary in a busy career and that in the company of these little ones he had found the very best in life.

The man who confines his association to grown folks ignores opportunities for developing the mind, for rejuvenating the soul and for renewing faith in mankind. In the marts of trade there is selfishness and brutality; in the political arena there is hypocrisy and insincerity; in the social circle there is double dealing and lack of candor; but in the temple of childhood there is sincerity and truth; in "the kingdom of never-grow-old" there is relief from the meanness and the malice of the world.

He who would seek rest from the toil and the anxiety of a busy life may find it if he but cast dull dignity to the winds and cultivate the acquaintance of those concerning whom the great Dickens said: "I love these little people, and it is not a slight thing when they, who are so fresh from God, love us." In those circles the weary man of business renews his lease upon life and warms the cockles of his heart; he is brought closer to nature, closer to truth, closer to God—as he strolls in the sunbeams that dance among the trees and flowers thriving about the palaces

of nature in "the kingdom of never-grow-old."

In the ballads and the tales of the nursery there are lessons of life and of love; lessons of philosophy and of logic, lessons of truth and of poetry; there is simple eloquence and real earnestness. Those who have not accustomed themselves to wander in this kingdom are not to appreciate these things, but many whose feet are familiar with the ground will bear testimony to these claims.

There are men who could not, with patience, sit through an evening of Wagner; men who do not know one of music's notes from another, and yet, if one doubts that there is music in the hearts of these men let him, some winter evening, peer through the portals of "the kingdom" and he will be given a touch of the soul of music compared with which the products of "the harp that once through Tara's halls," are hardly worthy of mention. Some of these notes may grate harshly upon the ears of the Wagnerian; the disciple of Thomas may imagine that he detects indications of discord; the follower of Beethoven may assert that all is not harmony; but those who, like the Irish lover in "Cousin Kate," are "of the kingdom," will be able to grasp the celestial character of the melody. There is real music in the "patty cake, patty cake" of "the

baker's man;" in the "trot, trot, trot" on the journey "to Banbury Cross;" in the "Hey, diddle, diddle" of "the cat and the fiddle," in the "Sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of rye, four and twenty blackbirds baking in a pie," or in "Oney, orry ickery, Ann; Fillison, Follison, Nicholas, John; Queevey, quavey, English navy, rinktum, tinktum; Buck."

Those who are "of the kingdom" can testify that out of the mouths of babes come wisdom. One of the best known of the district judges in the city of Omaha, long ago learned to leave his dignity upon the bench and to forget it while recuperating in the sunshine of "the kingdom." Not long ago a judge left his home in the morning before his infant child had awakened. Arousing from his sleep, the little one rubbed his eyes and calling to his mother, asked, "Where's my daddy?" He was told that the judge had gone to his daily labors. "Did he kiss me before he went away?" asked the child.

The mother replied in the affirmative.

For some time the little one lay still and then called, "Mamma, come and feel my heart."

The mother, with some curiosity and considerable anxiety, complied with the request and asked, "What's the matter with your heart?"

The little one replied, "My heart's a beatin' hard."

"What is your heart beating hard for?" asked the mother.

"My heart's a beatin' hard for my daddy to come home!" replied the child.

The sweetest singer of all the ages gave to men the sweetest song of all the years when he said: "Of such are the kingdom of heaven!"

As the forget-me-nots of the angels, strewn before the foot-sore man, make life's pathway easier to tread, these little "heart beats" make themselves felt over the broad expanse that separates the nursery from the counting room, spur men to greater effort and inspire them to nobler purpose.

The man in the Kentucky hemp fields, who had wandered in a maze of doubt and skepticism, was so impressed with his new found affection for a noble woman that he finally planted his feet firmly upon "faith's foundation stones" because he conceived that there must be a good God, else there could not be such a holy love. Within the radius of the child's pure affection, within the embrace of the little arms, within the fold of the little "heart-beats," there is no room for doubt, there is no place for skepticism. The purity, the love, the faith of "one of the least of these" points as unmistakably to divine origin as the needle points to the pole. Love and faith, and hope and charity, all these, as well as rest and recreation, await those who would make the happy pilgrimage over hallowed ground—in "the kingdom of never-grow-old."

RICHARD L. METCALFE.

A FAIR QUESTION

The Memphis News Scimitar asks "If the canal commission has a right to buy where it can buy cheapest, why shouldn't the citizen have the same privilege?"

That does seem like a fair question. But we must not forget that the canal commission has a record to make under the republican administration; and, under the republican administration, the duty and the privilege of the people is confined to the payment of bills.

A great many administration scandals are leaking out, despite the herculean efforts to stop the leaks. The leaks, not the scandals, seem to be causing all the worry.



THE BEAUTIFUL KINGDOM

There are faces alight with the glory of love
 In the "Kingdom of Never-grow-old."
 There are hearts that are light as the clear skies above
 In that kingdom of beauties untold.
 And happy is he who can dwell in that land
 Where children are ruling with scepters in hand,
 For youth is the monarch of one happy band,
 In the "Kingdom of Never-grow-old."
 No sorrows lurk deep in grim thickets of gloom
 In the "Kingdom of Never-grow-old."
 But flowers of beauty are ever in bloom
 And the pathways are shining as gold
 The laughter of little ones borne on the air
 Is surcease of sorrow and care for all
 For happiness reigns and has banished despair
 In the "Kingdom of Never-grow-old."
 The little hands wave a warm welcome to all
 In the "Kingdom of Never-grow-old."
 The sweet little voices in harmony call,
 And their little arms wait to enfold.
 And Father Time pauses to taste of the joys,
 To join in the games full of romping and noise
 That are played all the hours by sweet girls and boys
 In the "Kingdom of Never-grow-old."
 Come, walk with me now through the cool shadows deep
 In the "Kingdom of Never-grow-old."
 And backward the years of our troubles will creep
 While stories of youth are retold.
 All burdens grow light and all cares we dismiss;
 The gates are unlocked by a sweet baby kiss,
 And Love sits enthroned in the City of Bliss
 In the "Kingdom of Never-grow-old."
 WILL M. MAUPIN.

